

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

ENGLISH NATION.

Thursday, May 16. 1706.

IN discoursing of the publick Affairs, and especially the Transactions of the Field; I find People mighty forward in giving their Opinion, before the Issues of things, in which sometimes they live to see themselves mistaken; as how should it be otherwise; when Men argue without a Foundation? but if by a chance, greater than the blind Man catching the Hare, when he fell down upon her, they come to be right, the Pleasure they take in their wonderful Judgment, transports them into such Extasies, that they think themselves inspir'd, and makes them very dogmatick in their Conjectures ever after.

I apply this Story to two Cases; First, to our Success at the Siege of Barcelona, which we all concluded, was rais'd by the French, tho' without any other Notice,

than the really having no News at all: Now tho' it is, I hope, very true, that the Siege is rais'd, and our Calculations of time, as to the Sailing of our Fleet under Sir John Leake, make it more than probable, he had seen the French Squadron, if they would have stay'd there for him, and that we determine them strong enough to fight them; yet I must tell our Gentlemen, that if they consider two things, they might have seen thro' all their Calculations.

1. How much depends upon the taking the City of Barcelona, of what Consequence it is to the French to take it? What a Blow it will be to their Affairs, if they miscarry; and how it may not be long before the Confederates may enter Languedoc on that side.—

2. That

2. That if the *Fr.* had but sent 10000 Men more from *Rouffion* to strengthen their Army, it had been easie to carry on that Siege, tho' our Fleet rode Masters of the Sea; and how near they are already to the effecting it; the Fort being taken, and the Town not extraordinary strong on that side.

3. If they consider the Vigilance of the *French*; how rarely 'tis that they concert wrong Measures; and how seldom fail in the Execution of their Projects; and how easie it is for them to send a small Body of Troops to their Army, the *Miquelets* being however bold not able to stand a shock with 15 to 20 Battalions.

4. If they consider our Fleet carries no Forces capable to add any sufficient Strength to the Garrison, so as to make them able to face the *French*, when the Batteries having ruin'd the Defences of the Place, they shall march in at the Breach in Order of Battle; the most of the Men Sir *John Leake* having with him, being but two Battalions, till Captain *Walker* and Sir *Geo. Bing* joyn him: were all these things consider'd, it would appear very rash to conclude the Siege rais'd, and the *French* in their Wits.

If then it be true that the Siege is rais'd, as I see no Reason to doubt; I must put it down amongst the weakest and worst concerted Undertakings, that ever I knew the *French* set about in all this War, that if it miscarries, not only ruins all their Designs for that part of the World, dethrones their new erected King, and entirely cuts them off from the whole Kingdom of *Spain*; but opens a Door for our Entrance into *France* in the most defenceless and disadvantageous Part for them, that can possibly be; I mean on the Side of *Languedoc*, and by the Mountains of the *Cevennes*, which if it should come to be effected, the oppress'd Protestants of those Countries may at last have a Turn for their Liberty, and pay the *French* home for all their intolerable Barbarities.

I have been told, that indeed this had been done before, and 20 Battalions design'd for the Siege of *Turin*, were once directed to be sent down the *Rhone*, and shipp'd in

small Barks to reinforce the *Mareschal de Tbesse*; but that the powerful Influence of Monsieur *Chauvillard*, who is so resolutely bent upon the Siege of *Turin* in Favour of the Duke de *Fenillade*, obstructed it.

If this be true, we may see Divisions of Parties and Counsels have their Influence in all the Actions of the World, and with the same Speculation, it is worth observing, how fatal such things are always to Governments and great Undertakings.

If this be the true Reason, here 'tis evident then, that the grand Financier or Treasurer of *France*, has sacrific'd the King of *Spain*, and the Sum of Affairs on that side, to the private Family Glory of his Relation the Duke de *Fenillade*; and how ridiculous such things are, and how fatal to his Masters Interest, let such People guess, that us'd to tell us of a certain Emulation in the imperial Court, where instead of relieving and supplying the great Prince *Eugene* in his first Campaign in *Italy*, when he had the Superiority of the *French* every way, had push'd them to the very Gates of *Cremona*, and taken their General Prisoner; instead of the powerful Succours and Assistance, which might have been sent him, and which if it had, he had made an End of the War in *Italy* long ago; those Succours were spent in an honourary Voyage of the King of the *Romans* to the Siege of *Landau*, which the *Germans* spent five Months in bringing to pass, and afterwards lost it again in 27 Days.

Thus *Spain*, from whence the *French* have drawn Immense Riches, and continue every day to draw more, by the Silver whereof they are supported in this War, and for the Advantage whereof they began it; is like to be sacrific'd to the private Measures and differing Interests of the Ministers of State; who begin more than usually to bias and manage the Kings Resolutions, and have found the way to turn the Scale of Action, as it may be suited to their Advantage.

If this be so, it will serve very well to prompt the general Interest of the Confederacy; and the Confusion of their Coun-
els.

sels will be the establishing ours. For the Loss of *Turin* may be the saving of *Spain*; in which the *French* are certainly mistaken, since, had some Troops been spar'd to assist King *Philip*, the supporting him there, on which so much depends, must in time have compleated the Ruin of the Duke of *Savoy*, and *Turin* would have fallen in course.

What admirable Inferences may be drawn from hence, to convince us of the Necessity of a Conjunction of Councils, a Concurrence of Measures, and a Harmony of Management, for the due advancing the general Good, and carrying on the War with Success!

I might go back to the contrary, and to our Cost we have seen, how the general Subservience of every part, to the single Commands and secret Resolves of the *French* Court, has hitherto carried on their Affairs with unusual Success; in vain the Confederate Fleet were superiour to them, both in the Strength of their Navies and the Goodness of their Troops; they have conquer'd by the meer Force of their exquisite Management, their taking all Opportuni-

ties; Vigilance, to see their Advantages; Judgment, to determine; and Swiftness, to execute their Measure.

And while they continue to out-do us in these things; while they can be in the Field before us; while they can act, when we are separated and gone; while they can command, and we must intreat: I confess, I see no Possibility to prevent their having the better of us, tho' the War should continue to the End of this Century.

I have not room here, but I have had some Thoughts to form a Scheme for the Continuance of this War; for I yet see no End of it: and therefore it might not be amiss to propose here, if it be sett upon a right Foot, we shall get Money by it, grow rich upon the War, and consequently never desire to make an End of it. —

This I know would be pleasant to some Gentlemen, whose Commissions cost them more Money than they are worth; and to others, whose Offices must of Course expire with the War; But of this more hereafter.

MISCELLANEA.

THE Author of this has been frequently urg'd by Letters to break his firm Resolutions, of not answering malicious Railings, Rehearsals and Clamourers at this Paper; and had the Persons he means, proceeded by any Methods agreeable to common Reasoning or common Manners, he had been concern'd to reply.

But his Satisfaction is, That as their Names fail them, so does their Truth; and since it is so, he cannot think it worth while to concern himself about them: However to satisfy any Gentleman, who requires it, in the Truth of any thing asserted in these Papers; I shall put it into a true Method, and much better than giving a Story, and then being told *I lie*, call'd *four Names*, and *is us'd* by Men that value not

Truth, because they do not *tye themselves* up to speak it.

Any Letters I have printed; any Story I have told; any Suggestion I have made; which the *Rehearsal* or *Dr. Brown*, or any of their Authors say are false; or that I am impos'd upon in, or that I have forg'd; let them be offered, and I'll give any of those Gentlemen a fair and friendly Meeting, show my Originals, Name Persons, Places and Things, and make Proof of the Facts, and let it be determin'd before 5 or 500 of a side of Men of Honesty and Indifference, who are the *Lyars*, who the *Forgers of Letters*, who impose on the World, and who not.

If I am there convinc'd, I'll acknowledge, and make publick *Apology* of, and Satisfaction